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| **Informant** | **LMP-S1** | **Spanish** |
| **Date:** | **12-09-00** | **Mini DV** |
| **Interviewers:** | **M. Jones, P. Polk, C. Hernandez** | |
| **Transcriber:** | **Side A = ?  Side B = Claudia Hernandez** | |

**CH:** My channel is not working so I have to get cable.

**P:** It's not our fault she hadn't had a cable.

**CH:** I know. Do you want to start?

**J:** Yes.

**CH:** I would like to continue with the ailments and how you treat them? For example, getting frightened ("susto").

**S1:** I get an egg and pass it over the person who is lying down sideways. I do this up and down nine times and make the sign of the cross on the person's head. I also pass altamisa, rosemary, basil, and rue on the person's head nine times. I use fresh plants. After that, you get the egg and break it in a glass. Then I will know what the person has. If you get frightened unexpectedly, sometimes your heart will start beating really fast, you may pass out and your blood will stop flowing. One can get diabetes from this. Down there in Central America people get frightened from animal bites, near death experiences, or from "la llorona." For a person to get completely cured I must do this procedure three times. Then I take the person to a river or the ocean, cut colorful flowers, and throw them in the water. The person must then look at them as they go. Then, the egg in the glass will be placed under the bed of the person and it will show what has frightened the person. The next day the egg will be thrown in the river or in the ocean.

**CH:** Can you describe a particular instance where you have treated someone who got frightened?

**S1:** A little girl. People looked at her and scared her. When a child is scared, he jumps, cries a lot, cannot sleep, or gets scared by anything. Mothers don't know, but their hair stands up and they swell up and die. If they bring the child on time they do not die.

**CH:** How old was the little girl?

**S1:** Four months. She was really cute and people gave her the evil eye all the time. Sometimes there is men that treat their wives in a violent manner and since their baby sees what is happening he gets frightened. Or sometimes people play with children and accidentally drop them and then they get scared.

**P:** Is it mostly children that get susto?

**S1:** From what I know it's mostly children, but in Oaxaca old women also suffer from fright. Men also suffer from this, but not that much. In Guatemala, men get frightened by

mad cows. They get chased by them and some die. It is something really serious that if it's not treated on time, you can die.

**J:** Who suffers from this in the US and who do you treat more often?

**S1:** People from Oaxaca, Puebla, and Veracruz. People have strong beliefs but they get scared, feel sad, and are sick. They get depressed, they lose their appetite, they have stomachaches and head aches. I heal them when they come.

**CH:** How do you know that they have been frightened by?

**S1:** They look yellow, they are very sad, they look at me and start crying, or their body flinches.

**CH:** Is it mostly older people who suffer from this?

**S1:** Yes old women, old men, and children.

**P:** Why older people?

**S1:** They are very believers of everything in their culture. They see this society Anything here frightens them.

**CH:** For example, if my boyfriend does not believe in this spiritual healing and he is frightened, can he be cured?

**S1:** Yes, if you believe, you should bring him to me. Some women have brought American children. They are often the children that they take care of as nannies. The women ask for permission to bring the children and I cure them because they believe. There are other people that have a lot of faith and ask if I can touch their son or their daughter's head. They have also asked me to light a candle in their name. There are people who have faith and want me to bring the faith in them. There is a puertorican lady who had pain in her waist but I did not know exactly what was wrong with her so I used a special smoke and cured her. After that, she says that whenever she comes, she leaves full of energy. She is always thanking me for what I did and always asks me to give her my blessings. She said that the doctors took flesh and a piece of bone from her but found nothing. Now she is very happy.

**P:** Are there any other problems that are caused from envy?

**S1:** Many. For example, if you are rich, people get jealous and find the urge to ruin your life. They do evil things so you can get fired, so you won't have money, so you can get sick, or even get in an accident. After that, you can get sick. Some of them get heart problems, and some swell up. These people want you to suffer and die. They want to kill you right away so for example, they do some sort of curse where they send an insect such as a bee so that it can sting you and the wound gets worse and worse until you die.

**J:** What remedy do you have for people that get constipated?

**S1:** Constipation is like a cold isn't it? Yeah, like when something goes up to your head through your nose.

**CH:** I thought constipation was when you couldn't go to the bathroom. So first tell me what remedy you have for colds and then for constipation.

**S1:** Constipation (constipacion in Spanish) is when you get headaches, bronchitis, and when your lungs can be affected. In Guatemala we cure it with ?(verbena). You boil it and then lemon is added. But there are some things you have to do in order to cure yourself completely and not get a serious problem. You get a pot with water, eucalyptus, orange leaves, and rosemary. Then you let it boil and make a tea out of it to give to the person. You also save another cup so that you can give it later on to the patient. After you take it off the stove you add three bottles of florida water and three bottles of vicks. Then you add the alcohol. Then the person gets in the tub and I pour the ingredients from the pot over the person in the tub. The person has to stay in the tub until he can't stand it. When the person gets out of the bathtub, he should take the rest of the tea. Then he should cover himself up without drying up and should go directly to bed.

**CH:** What about for people who are (extreñimiento in Spanish) constipated?

**S1:** I get small lima beans, toast them and then mash them. Then you add a spoon of olive oil, corn oil, sesame, a teaspoon of rosemary oil and blend everything together. Then the person drinks it.

**CH:** What do you use for indigestion?

**S1:** You get the bark of an encino stick. You burn it and you get the ashes. You get the ashes with a spoon and add it to a glass half full of water. Then you add a sprinkle of salt, honey, lemon, and a little bit of baking soda. The person drinks it and then you massage the person's stomach with olive oil.

**CH:** What do you use for arthritis?

**S1:** I think I told you already. Don't you remember? The one with the yucca plants and bell flowers.

**CH:** Oh yeah, we do have it down. Ok, what about when someone has irritation or infection in an eye?

**S1:** I use about three big white roses and put them on a really clean white plate. Then I put a few grains of salt on the flowers. You set the roses outside to catch the morning dew and you add the water that accumulates to the eye.

**P:** Why does everything have to be white? Is it because it is the way it is done or because it is a secret that you don't want anyone to know?

**S1:** It's just the way it was done a long time ago when there were no doctors around. It is not a secret. You are the only people who know my secrets.

**CH:** What do you do when someone has insomnia?

**S1:** I use flowers from a Creole orange tree and lemon flowers. I boil them in water. Then the person drinks about three cups of the tea. There is also the ?(chipilin) plant. The first thing you do is you let it dry out and you cut it from the top and put them under your bed. You can also boil them in water and make a tea out of it. There are also some special roots from Guatemala that people put under their pillow. But if the person has a serious problem, you use ?(campanula) roots. But the only place where you can find those is Guatemala.

**CH:** What would you do if there were no places where they sold these products?

**S1:** People from Guatemala are already bringing plants from Guatemala. They know they are not allowed to bring them but they still find a way to get them through and start growing them at home. Then they start spreading the word and eventually a lot of people grow them. It would not affect me. I don't really buy plants on stores, I have my own. If I have the plant, I'll give my patients their remedy, but if I don't, people get it for me. I always have a way of finding whichever plant I need.

**P:** Are there places around Los Angeles that you know where something grows.

**S1:** Not here. In Guatemala, there are all kinds of medicinal plants. There are even plants which enable people to have children.

**J:** What are the basic plants that you have here in your home and that you use frequently?

**S1:** Rue, rosemary, sweet basil, geraño, "cinco negritos", bombilia (bugambilia), aloe, pink and white bells, and chatillas. "Chatillas" (also called impaciente and quinceañera) is used for when women deliver a child and end up with strong vaginal pain. It is like a cancer that women get in their vagina. You boil the flowers and drink the tea and this will help you cut your menstruation.

**CH:** What is ?(cinco negritos)?

**CH:** I think that here in the U.S. they call it ?(espanta muertos or rompesaraguey) and it's a flower. It is used for women that have a really hard time delivering a child because they are very tight. Your baby can die inside you if you don't do anything about it. So you take this tea and the baby will come out quickly.

**S1:** Have you read what it said about menstruation?

**CH:**Yeah.

**S1:** So what do you want to see?

**CH:** I want to see two basics. (I asked him about the rainy secrets; secrets that you didn't have to perform or do in order to cut the plants. And he said no, you just have to have a

good end for growing and you just have to have like a green plant, basically). What are *granos* (sores)?

**S1:** *Granos*? *Granos* are those that you get from an ant bite or a bee sting. They are often an infection. They can also be a sting allergy or rash. As when you're next to someone that has a skin rash from not showering, and it infects you. It looks like pimples, but it's just a skin irritation. It's very itchy. You can get rid of *granos* by using azufre. You take the azufre and you boil it and give yourself a bath with it. You also add criolina. He says he's not sure if it's some type of an herb or what. He just says it's something you can obtain in pharmacies in Guatemala. So you take a bath and remove the *granos.*

**CH:** What about other kinds of skin irritations and problems like acne?

**S1:** I don't really work with pimples or kids a lot, but I know how to get rid of them. What people do in Guatemala is you take a container, boil some water, add a lot of sugar and a little bit of ?(azufre) and you boil it all up and the after it's done boiling, you take a towel and you cover your head and you let the vapor get on your face and then you take a towel and you scrub your face because what it does is it opens your pores and makes your face sweat. He says what you do is you can make a face mask with eggs and little drops of aloe plant and you blend it and put it on and later remove it and that will clean up your face.

**CH:** So why is it that you don't work with acne problems?

**S1:** I don't work with kids or acne because… Can I say it? Ok. They say doctors here are very good, but they aren't really that good. Doctors sometimes use machines and make incisions on your body to try to find out what's wrong with you. I have seen cases of 9-month pregnant women that have gone to general doctors and they send them to another doctor that specializes in pregnant women. You go see him and he thinks you have gastritis, diabetes, or liver problems. And he never really finds out what's wrong with you. There was also a girl that almost got her face cut open because the doctors thought she had gallstones in her liver. But she can't have any, she's just a girl- her name is Shakira. So doctors don't really know what's wrong with people. But they don't want us to have our own businesses because they charge a lot of money, we charge much less, and actually cure the clients. I want to avoid issues. Doctors in Guatemala aren't like the ones we have here. They just poke at you or cut into you, and still don't know what's wrong with you. Sometimes they don't really diagnose you properly.

**CH:** So the fear of getting in trouble, of having legal problems for practicing medicine affects what you do?

**S1:** I cure more than the general hospital here. And now a days there's a general hospital in Guatemala, the hospital of Marroquina, a very good hospital. So if I would put my office next to that hospital, I would take away patients from them. And I don't charge as much as they do. So a lot of doctors here have realized that I can cure a lot of things. So they come and knock on my door asking for "the doctor". I just open the door and tell them there's no doctor here, just a *curandero*. And they come and record everything I

say with a celular phone and make an investigation. So they don't want to let us cure people.

**CH:** Have you ever treated bladder infections?

**S1:** No.

**CH:** How about burns?

**S1:** Yeah. I make a tomato and **azufre** shake and spread it on this part right here, and it goes away. What people should do is for example, if they have a car accident, they should just place half a tomato in the affected area and it will make it heal faster. Don't put water or touch it at all, cause if you add water it will cause you to get a blister. So if you don't want a blister you take a bit of *tepescohuite* powder, which comes from a tree. So you put the powder here. You do that or you can also blend salt, ?(cancerina) and water.

**CH:** What is azufre?

**S1:** It's a powder you get from volcanoes that you can use to get rid of sores.

**CH:** Do you have a sample of that volcanic material?

**S1:** Yeah.

**CH:** We'll take a look at it later. What do you have for kidney infections?

**S1:** If you have a kidney infection or lower back pain, I recommend ?(tarai), which is the bark of a tree- a really, really hard, hard tree. You just make a tea out of it and drink it. Then you can also take ?(sauco), a big flower that comes from a gigantic tree. You take the flowers and make a tea and drink it too. You can also make an alfalfa or a ?(cola de caballo) tea**. Cola de caballo** is a plant that grows close to rivers. *Gringos* here use it for decoration. There's actually a home close to Arlington that has a lot of **cola de caballo.** It's just in their garden. You can also take rice, put it in some water, let it sit for around three hours, and drink it. You can do the same with hiviscus, but without putting any sugar so that it can have a complete effect on you.

**CH:** What are these?

**S1:** They are the ?(Piedras del Encanto Chichulil). You can find them between Sunpango and Chimaltenango. It is up in a mountain. They're ancient rocks. I used them so that more people can come, so that I can have health and so that I can have prosperity. I bought this one from my uncle who was a great witch, a big curandero. His name was Franciso Garcia. He doesn't need cards or anything to tell you what is wrong with you. He just used the glass of water. He's been dead for two years. Every so often you can kill three black roosters and you take their blood and poor them on these rocks.

**P**: How come you have all the orange peels in front of the statue of El Duende?

**S1:** It's so that he will take care of the store and there will be more money. But he doesn't want the orange, he just wants the peelings. We stay with the fruit.

**CH:** And San Simon has lemons. Why is that?

**S1:** They're actually oranges. He likes oranges and lemons. He likes being loved and respected.

**CH:** Thanks. Next time I would like to learn the story of El Negro Jose.

**S1:** I can't give you the story, because I don't really know it. I only know he's Cuban and that he's very good. I have one here, but I don't really work with it. I only know about San Simon, and… but not Cubans, I don't know anything about Cubans. A Cuban friend gave it to me. But I don't really believe in any of the Cuban saints. I just think Cubans are a little crazy. I saw this Cuban woman the other day in this place. And her husband told her it was time to go. She screams at him and tells him they still have three more hours to go. So she starts pulling her skirt up and starts dancing to the rhythm of music. It's too much for me.

END OF SIDE A

**Side B**
**12/09/00**
**Translator: Claudia**

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CH:Yeah.

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